

North Dakota Interagency Coordinating Council
EI Services Subcommittee
9-10-08

Present: Suzy Heise, Jill Staudinger, Kimm Sickler, Stephen Olson, Margaret LoMurray, Jim Carter, Deb Balsdon, Keith Gustafson, Roxane Romanick, Angela Glaser, Arlene de la Paz, Carol Johnson

Welcome and Introductions

Updates:

Crossroads Conference: This is the conference set for DD Case Management and Early Intervention staff. About 150 people are registered for the conference as of this date. Dr. Kiti Freier is presenting for the pre-conference on drug-exposed infants and infant mental health. There will be a Brown Bag Lunch meeting on Tuesday at noon regarding ideas about implementing the new case management models that are being suggested for the waiver renewal. Deb reviewed the conference agenda. There is reimbursement for ICC members and subcommittee members, as well as parents of children under 3 who are in EI, staff working with individuals under 3, and DD Case Management.

Review of North Dakota's federal determination: In June, we got a response back from the federal government on the report that was filed in Feb., 2008. North Dakota moved up a determination level to "needs assistance". The areas of concern still continue to be Indicator #7 – 45 day timeline, multi-disciplinary evaluations and initial development of IFSP. This is still impacted by our performance on completing hearing screenings. As of last week, Infant Development staff was trained on conducting hearing screenings using the OAE and the tympanogram. Equipment was distributed. The other additional indicator that continues to be problematic is Indicator #9 – correction of non-compliance. The state office will be making determinations on the local programs in the near future. Deb asked for input on how to address programs that fix findings quickly after they are found locally. She noted that she feels that this kind of behavior needs to be rewarded. Deb noted that the local programs will be notified of their local determination the first week in October and then these will be posted on the Early Intervention website.

Pending Autism Waivers: Optional Adjustment Requests (OAR) to the DHS budget were submitted regarding additional funding for waivers for children with autism. The waiver addressing transition aged children has been pulled and will not be submitted. The second waiver will serve children 5 years and under. If funded, the program would start in 2010. Deb reviewed the components of the waiver such as: evaluation team, behavioral training, financial support for equipment and materials, etc. This waiver would be built to serve 30 children. There is a timeline that children can only be on the waiver for a maximum of 3 years.

The other additional OAR's that are being submitted are relating to Infant Development funding, funding to assist families who have children over 12 and

still require childcare, administrative reimbursement of the Family Care Option program for some of the children who's services are high cost coming out of the state hospital and Grafton. There was a discussion by subcommittee members on how this type of service requires direct care staff with a higher level of qualification. State office staff noted that there is exploration going on for programs of excellence across the country that deal with populations of individuals who have both mental retardation and mental health/behavioral issues. There is also an OAR to create web-based accessibility for programs like ASSIST. Additional OAR's: Funding for children/adults living in their family homes that have intense medical needs and then also for individuals over 21 who have intense medical needs.

The question was asked about what the process is for getting OARs approved. They are prioritized at the level of the cabinet of the DHS, then sent to OMB, and then on to the Governor's Office. The Department has until October 15th to get them submitted to OMB.

Region VI – Request regarding eligibility transition: Region VI RICC has put together a policy brief that describes concerns regarding inconsistent determination of eligibility for Part B services for those children turning 3. They are requesting that a study be conducted by the state Department of Public Instruction – Special Education. The study would examine the quality of eligibility determinations. It was noted that there is not a statewide definition of eligibility.

Comments: Discussion about whether or not Response to Intervention has a place in the Part C/Part B Transition process. There was also discussion about the differences across the state in the application of Least Restrictive Environment for preschoolers. Recommendation to how new funding for public funded preschool may impact LRE for children with disabilities. The subcommittee recommends that the NDICC consider the issue for the study.

Hearing Screening Equipment and Training – Information on this update was reported out in the Federal Determination agenda item. Holly Major noted that she was asking a question for Region II RICC regarding whether or not Right Track will have access to the hearing screenings and/or equipment. At this time, this is not allowed due to the agreements with the consulting audiologist.

Comments: The subcommittee members discussed the option of making the screenings available for those children that fall out of the universal newborn screening and require a follow-up. In addition, the subcommittee members felt that there are other instances where children have red flags for hearing concerns, but there is no parent follow-up on getting the screenings done through traditional medically-based mechanisms. Discussion about whether or not the School for the Deaf teachers could help out on some of the Right Track children until further decisions regarding Right Track could be made.

Minutes Review for 5-22-08:

Keith moved to approve, Jim Carter seconded – minutes approved. No corrections

EI Competency Work Group – Group reviewed information regarding the core competencies that have been revised by the Competency Work Group. A question was asked regarding what timelines have been set for implementation. No deadline has been set at this. A concern was noted about how these changes may intersect with changes that may occur due to the waiver renewal especially in the area of case management.

Roxane and Deb reviewed the decision that the work group has made regarding staff qualifications (ECSE issue and the assistants (COTA, PTA, SLPA).

Discussion about the recruitment of speech and language therapists across the country. This continues to be problematic.

Natural Learning Opportunities Work Group: Deb reviewed the summary with the subcommittee. Highlights of the proposed work plan were provided to the subcommittee members.

Right Track:

- RFP's were issued to Williston, Grand Forks, Jamestown, and Dickinson and the state office did receive 4 proposals and will have the intents out next week.
- Data Base Design – Deb reported that she has started conducting design sessions with Right Track coordinators and Early Childhood Tribal Tracking regarding "Kidtrack". The sessions will determine what a new data base needs to look like. Some additional recommendations: want to know how many screenings each child receives; how many screenings before a child is referred; what happens with children that have been referred and not found eligible; discussion about who the referral sources are, what happens to certain populations (i.e. CAPTA referrals); track conditions (i.e. torticollis; late talkers, etc.), and they would like to know who the siblings are. In addition, would like to know which children are in special education; how long they require services and if they are dismissed and return.
- Another recommendation is to see a cross-walk with the Birth Review process – only get 23% responses for the letters that are sent out.
- Feedback is that Right Track providers would like to meet more often.
- Discussion about how there is difficulty with mail service in the Ft. Totten area, because there is no house delivery and they only have to get post office boxes.

MR-DD Waiver Renewal:

- Deb reported that every 5 years, the state has to renew their federal waiver with the federal government. There are 3 waivers under DD – the traditional waiver (includes Infant Development), two self-directed support waiver: children and adults. All of the waivers expire 3-30-09. This time the state office must also deal with the issues that came up through the federal Deficit Reduction Act.

- Intermittent services are those where the client is living with their primary caregiver. For this, we would look at case management through the waiver – There is an Optional Adjustment Request to increase funding for additional case management. Currently considering that the non-intermittent services would receive administrative case management and then the program case management would develop the plan.
- This may mean changing the roles of case managers, the roles of DDPA's, and also the responsibilities of the DD providers.
- Deb reported that the state office has to now control the waiver through the waiver cap instead of through the regional allocations.

Co-Chairs:

- Discussion about the process about selecting co-chairs – Consensus to have one of the co-chairs be a parent. There is a requirement that one of the co-chairs be an NDICC member. Jill and Angela were officially appointed.

Announcements:

- Suzy has a new puppy and is the new DDPA for Region VI.
 - Next Thursday, Minot Infant Development is celebrating their 30th birthday party at the Holiday Inn in Minot.
 - 2009 Pathfinder's Parent Involvement Conference – April 14 -16th – Request for Presentations will be going out next week. The conference will be in Bismarck at the Doublewood. They are going to offer break-out sessions for the first time
 - October 16 -17th – Pediatric Therapy Partners presenting a workshop on Oral Motor/Feeding.
 - Region VIII KIDS program has a new host agency which is HIT, Services.
- Deb announced that the Jeans Day recipients at the Crossroads Conference are Designer Genes, Family Voices, and Ali's Playground

Next Meeting:

Decision to meet in January, 2009 – Monday, 12th – Check on polycom 11:00 – 2:00

Minot, Devils Lake, Fargo, Dickinson, Grand Forks, Jamestown, Bismarck

IMPORTANT NOTE: Meeting is will not on Monday, January 12th as the NDICC is scheduled to meet that day to review the Annual Performance Report. Dates are being explored in February, 2009